
Mentor's Guide

Supporting Certification Candidates

Completing NHSA's Certification process takes a great deal of effort from the candidate, as well as support and mentorship from their supervisor and agency leadership. These are the NHSA's recommendations for organizing the process so that it is meaningful to the whole program, as well as most beneficial to the candidate. Please remember, these are only suggestions. NHSA recognizes that every Head Start/Early Head Start agency is unique. Your agency might develop many other strategies to maximize this process.

- 1. Identify a service area manager or someone to coordinate the process.** This person should review the candidate's portfolio in its entirety and can be helpful in:
 - Establishing an initial timeline for completion with the candidate(s)
 - Checking in with the candidate(s) to make sure they are meeting deadlines
 - Identifying resources and sources of information
 - Assisting with writing, spelling, grammar, etc., and interpreting competencies, functions, and activities as needed
 - Reviewing the activities before they are finalized
 - Making sure the workbook(s) are submitted properly
- 2. Set up weekly sessions with the candidate(s).** Secure the expertise of the program's managers in early childhood development and health, family and community partnerships, and program design and management to provide training/tutoring in the competencies that relate to their areas. These managers will review the candidate's completed activities in their respective content areas and make suggestions for improvement. Some programs have found a schedule of one competency per week worked well for them.
- 3. Recognize, praise, and celebrate with the candidate(s) every step of the way!** This is truly a substantial undertaking and candidates should be applauded for their ambition to learn, demonstrate their knowledge, and improve.
- 4. When candidate(s) receive the credential, publicize it!** Share it in the program's newsletter, recognize them at an all-staff meeting, banquet, or other celebration, and be sure to involve the Policy Council in the process.